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## CHAUCERIANA

### THE CANTERBURY TALES

A 82, *I gesse*. Examples of this "Yankeeism" in British poetry are:

Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, 1539-40:

And to our wish I see one hither speeding,  
An Ebrew, as *I guess*, and of our tribe.

Tennyson, *Maud*, Part II, 5, 3:

And another, a lord of all things, praying  
To his own great self, as *I guess*.

In my *Notes on Chaucer* I have called attention to Shelley, *Adonais*, 31.

A 110, *woodcraft*. Is a knowledge of "woodcraft" ascribed to Paris, the brother of Hector, in *Roman de Troie*, 5455-56?

Traire saveit merveilles bien,  
Mais sot de bois sor tote rien.

A 200, *in good poynt*. Cf. *Sir Ferumbras*, 515:

it wil don him be hol and sounde: & maky him *in god poynt*.

A 258, *love-dayes*. These were frequently used for fraudulent purposes; cf. *Piers Plowman* C text, Passus XII, vss. 16 ff.

A 264. In *Roman de Troie*, vs. 5330 it is recorded that Hector stammered:

Mais un sol petit baubeiot.

A 637-38,

And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,  
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.

In the *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon* of K. F. T. Wander I find the following under "Latein" (Vol. V):

Post sumptum vinum loquitur mea lingua Latinum,  
Et bibo cum bis ter, sum qualibet arte magister.

also (Vol. II):

Ille bibat vinum qui scit dictare Latinum.

In the Life of Saint Meriasek, a Cornish miracle play written at the beginning of the sixteenth century, edited by Whitley Stokes, occurs the following (vss. 80-81):

pan ve luen ov zos a wyn  
ny gara covs mes laten,

which is translated by Mr. Stokes: "When my tot may be full of wine I love not to speak (aught) save Latin."

A distinguished philologist has informed me that the proverb was common in the University of Strassburg when he was a student there. Another scholar relates an anecdote of an inebriated student, somewhere in Germany, who said, in my informant's presence: "Wenn ich besoffen bin so sprech' ich nur Französisch."

A 1422, Chaucer probably had in mind the biblical phrase (Josh. 9:21, 23):  
"hewers of wood and drawers of water."

A 1660, for the exaggeration, cf. *Roman de Troie*, 24372-73:

Jusqu' as ventres sont li destrier  
En sanc vermeil.

A 1697, *Under the sonne*, defined by Mather as "to the eastward under a low-lying sun." I have observed only one other instance of this use of the phrase, and that is in the Flemish *Reinaert de Vos*, 759-60:

Hi sach, sunt onder die sonne,  
Lamfroite come geronnen.

"He saw sidelong, under the sun, Lamfroite come running."

A 1910, Coral, as a building material, occurs in *Sir Ferumbras* 1324-27:

þe walles of þe chambre were: araid for þe nones,  
y-maked of ful riche gere: of coral and riche stones,  
þe wyndowes wern y-mad of iaspere: & of oþre stones fyne,  
ypoudred wiþ perree of polastre: þe leues [= folding-doors] were masalyne  
[? = brass].

In *Roman de Troie* 14631 ff. there is an elaborate description of a chamber of alabaster, the translucency of which material was observed by the author.

A 2160, *cloothe of Tars*. I cannot, on any evidence accessible to me, agree with the New English Dictionary in identifying this word *Tars* with the mythical *Tarsia* or *Tharsia* in the confines of China. To cite Mandeville as an authority, as that dictionary does, is a good deal like appealing to Baron Munchausen. The name really comes from *Tarsus*, as is nowhere better shown than by the title of the romance of *The Kyng of Tars and the Soudon of Damas*. But mediaeval ideas about the place were hazy, as is shown by Boccaccio's coupling *Tarso* with *Sidon*, and calling *Sidon*, *Parthian* (*Teseide*, 8, stanzas 35 and 40). He seems to have regarded *Tars* as another name for *Tyre*, and to have thought that both *Tyre* and *Sidon* were in the Far East. "Cloth of Tars" is, according to all accessible evidence, "cloth of Tarsus," just as "damask" is "cloth of Damascus." The following examples of the phrase "cloth of Tars" do not solve the problem, but, in the dearth of evidence, are worth noting:

*Sir Ferumbras*, 4463-64: And we hau her scarletes & grene, & cloþes of tarse,  
and of sulk ful schene, & cloþes eke of golde.

*Sir Ferumbras*, 5077: On a cloþ of tarse, ryche & fyn.

2698, *in memorie*. "Conscious," "in his senses." For memory = "mind," cf. *Comus*, 205-6:

a thousand fantasies  
Begin to throng into my memory.

Webster, *Duchess of Malfi*, I, 1:

I am making my will (as 'tis fit princes should  
In perfect memory), and, I pray, sir, tell me,  
Were not one better make it smiling, thus,  
Than in deep groans and terrible ghastly looks, etc.

Webster, *The Devil's Law*, Case 2, 1:

He died in perfect memory, I hope, and made me his heir.

2803-5: In my *Notes on Chaucer* I have hunted a false trail in seeking to find the source of the idea that the heart is the seat of the intellect in Aristotle. Chaucer and Boccaccio both derived the idea from the Bible. Cf. I Kings 3:9. The Jews seem to have derived this conception from Egypt; see J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, *passim*.

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